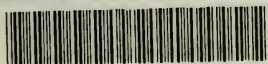


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Grandma's Spinning Wheel



Grandma's Spinning Wheel

By

Anna Mackall May

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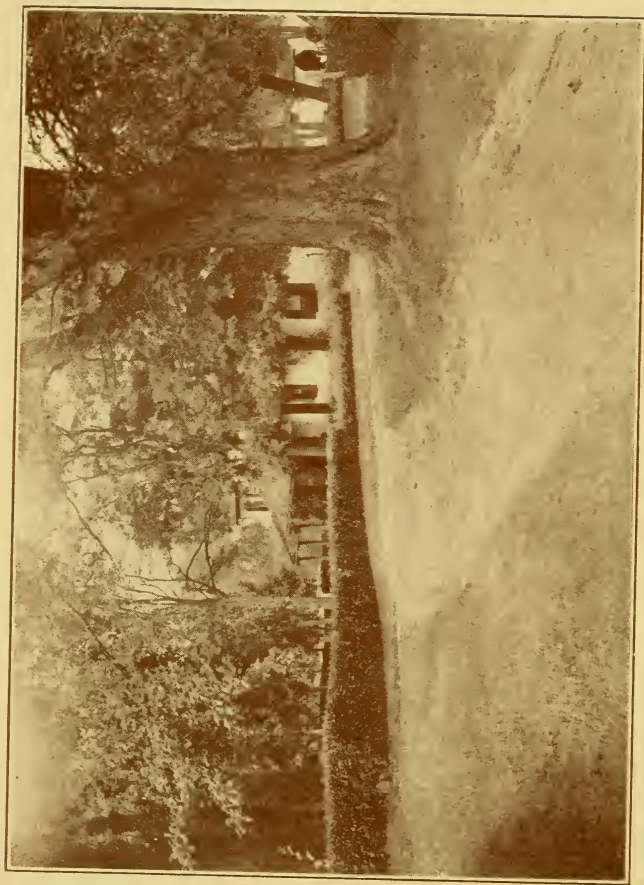
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PREFACE


Near the headwaters of the beautiful Chesapeake Bay in My Maryland stands "Beech-Holm," the scene of the true incident related in this simple story. The illustrations are reproductions of recent photographs of the house and surroundings.

The generation now there is the eighth in lineal descent from those who began life in the old homestead "low and white."

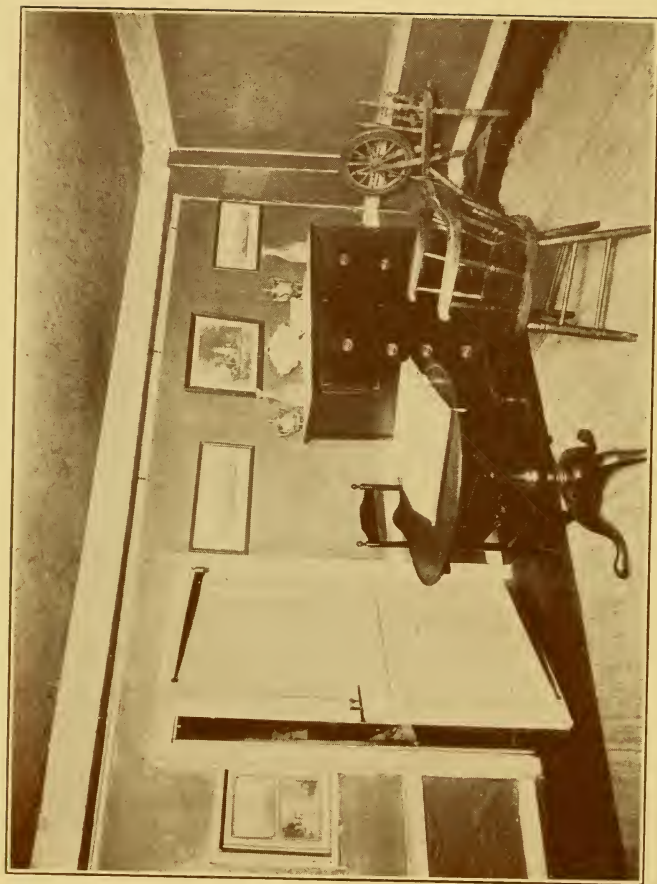


A QUAIN OLD DWELLING, LOW AND WHITE
NESTLES MOSS-CROWNED ADOWN THE LANE

Grandma's Spinning Wheel

A decorative flourish consisting of two symmetrical, stylized, wavy lines that curve downwards and outwards from the center, resembling a stylized 'M' or a pair of wings.

A quaint old dwelling, low and white,
Nestles moss-crowned adown the lane.
It seems to rest as if in dream
Of years long past of joy and pain.



BUT TIME HAS LIGHTLY LAID HIS HAND
ON BEAM AND EAVE AND LATCHET DOOR,

It seems to rest, its work well done,
In varied scenes its part it bore,
But Time has lightly laid his hand
On beam and eave and latchet door.

Athwart the yard great beech-trees cast
A shade so deep that scarce at noon
The sun-rays dare invade the spot,
They e'en deny the friendly moon.

A garden sweet with box and shrub
And “borders” in old-time array,
A hill-side orchard where in Spring
The song-birds trill their roundelay.

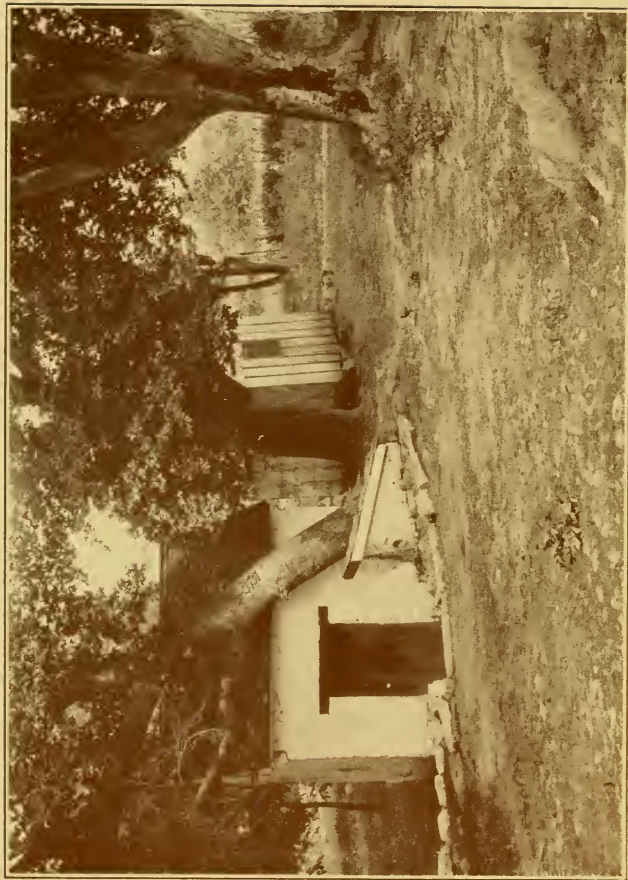


A HILL-SIDE ORCHARD WHERE IN SPRING
THE SONG-BIRDS TRILL THEIR ROUNDELAY

A brooklet winding thro' the mead,
A fern-clad glen with mossy rock,
A spacious barn whose Autumn hoard
Gives want and idleness the mock.

A spring whose pure and limpid depths
The beeches guard with loving might,
In easy reach there hangs the gourd,
A healthful, cooling draught in sight.

A sweet old picture fair to view
Is this quaint homestead low and white,
Its shaded lawn and vine-clad porch
To peaceful rest and dream invite.



A SPRING WHOSE PURE AND LIMPID DEPTHS
THE BEECHES GUARD WITH LOVING MIGHT.

Amid the valley lovers roam,
While children vie the hills to mount,
Then gather round the kindly board
And hear Grandma her tales recount

Of youth and hope when life was fair,
Her form unbent, her eye yet bright,
Of other groups once gathered there
In that old dwelling low and white.

Of Winter nights, when gathered round
The oaken fire blazing high,
Mid whirl of wheels to drown the blast
They little recked how time flew by.

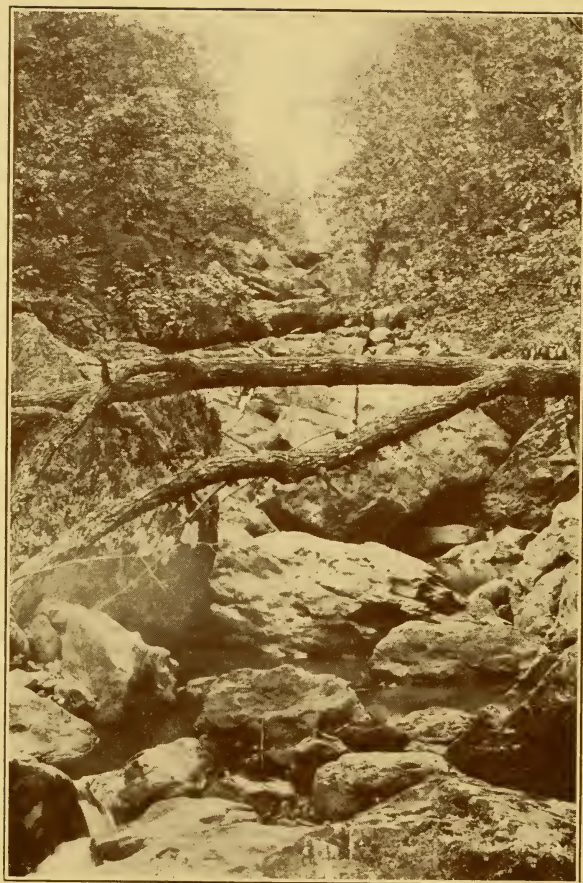


OF SPINNING WHEELS WITH FLYERS SHARP
THAT CAUGHT THE NEEDLESS IN THEIR WHIRL.

Of spinning wheels with flyers sharp
That caught the heedless in their whirl,
Of glances cast across the fire
By love-lorn youth or roguish girl.

The varied pranks that Cupid played,
(The god was there in all his might),
Amid the wheels his bow to draw
Gave him full measure of delight.

One day as Grandma softly slept
And smiling dreamed of life when fair,
The children to the attic crept
To see what treasure might be there ;



A FERN-CLAD GLEN WITH MOSSY ROCK

And wand'ring round beneath the eaves
For nook or niche in which to peer,
Their keen eyes spied amid the gloom
With cobwebs twined an object queer.

With eager hold they drew it forth
And brushed the dust wreaths from around,
Then bore it merrily to show
Grandma the odd thing they had found.

“A wheel between two rods” they said,
“A board aslant, some hooks of steel,
What is its name and what its use,
And why in attic thus conceal?”

O'er Grandma's face there came a smile
As one who would sweet thoughts reveal,
And tenderly her lips replied,
"Ah, me ! My dear old spinning wheel.

Ah! Darlings, little can you dream
What memories sweet wake at the name ;
Again I see myself a girl,
Around the fire see the same

Dear faces, feel the warmth and glow
As up and up the bright sparks fly.
No idlers there, with mirth and song
We each our busy fingers ply.

“And round and round the noisy wheels
Go merrily as fast we spin,
While higher grows the fleecy pile
And louder waxes mirthful din.

Full well we knew that Farmer John
Would soon appear his aid to lend :
Bashful his mien, but true his heart,
In storm or sunshine e'er our friend.

“ We all knew well he loved our Bess,
But she was wild and paid no heed
To Farmer John’s imploring looks,
No matter how his eyes might plead.

The spinning wheel was turned so fast
Its whirring speed all else would drown
While mockingly her laugh rang out,
And downcast John would sighing frown.

“ Thus time rolled on, the months passed by,
John’s hope grew dim, nor goal seemed near,
One eve again in wonted place
He closer drew that Bess might hear.



A BROOKLET WINDING THRO' THE MEAD

But she was in her wildest mood,
And whirring drove the spinning wheel,
One look, Alas! and then John's hand
Was caught in flyers' hooks of steel.

“ Ah! Gone were mirth and mischief then
And Bess stood by, a maid demure,
With pitying looks and fingers deft
She into shreds her kerchief tore,

Bound up the wound, spoke words of cheer,
Ah! Bess, what did your face reveal?
For bashful John now spoke outright
And quiet stood the spinning wheel.

“ ‘The hurt the flyers make is slight,
With deeper wound my heart is scarred,
Heal this wound too, list to my plea,
Too long the wheel and I have warred.’ ”

“And did she then?” the children ask,
“Did this wild Bess her fault atone?”
Just then within the open door
Grandfather’s smiling kind face shone.

“Eh! Wife, what now, the children here?
What mischief do these rogues conceal?
What have we here? Why bless my heart,
It is your same old spinning wheel.

Good cause have I to know this wheel,
Let me the busy flyers see.
You mind the night they caught my hand?
Look, here's the mark they left on me.



OF WINTER NIGHTS

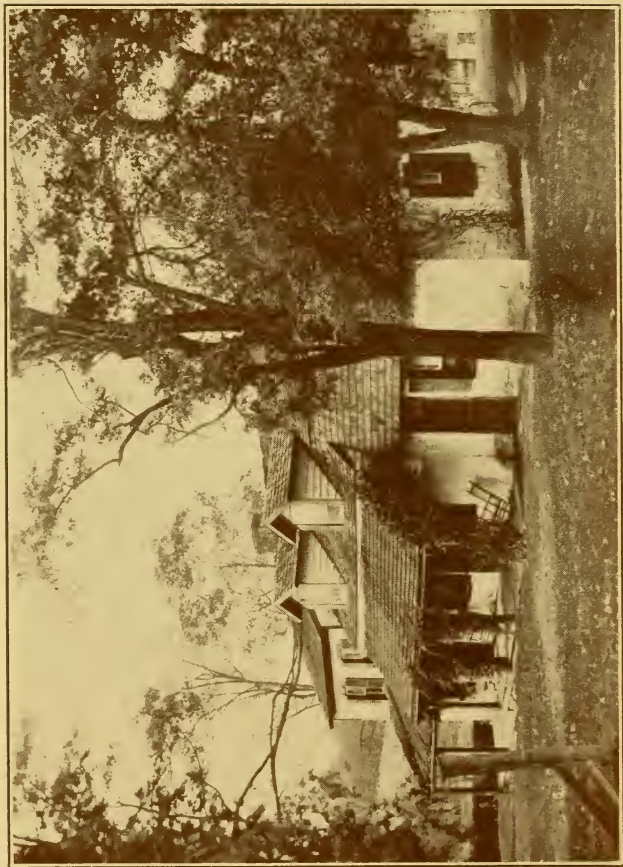
What's in the air?" Grandfather turns
With puzzled look the group to view,
But only hears the merry shout—
"Oh! Dear, sly Grandma, Bess was YOU."

In church-yard shade dear Grandma rests,
And by her side sleeps Farmer John,
The low white house is standing yet,
But all the old-time folks are gone.

The spinning wheel no more abides
With cobwebs wreathed in corner lone,
It rests with ribbons gayly decked,
While memory speaks of Farmer John.

Still stand the beech-trees, o'er the spring
With loving reach their branches spread,
Beneath their shade the children play
And youth and maiden softly tread.

And age walks there and dreams, and yearns
For vanished hands and voices still,
While mid the orchard's bloom as yore,
The song-birds meet and love songs trill.



ITS SHADED LAWN AND VINE CLAD PORCH

A cheer for Beech-Holm ! May the years
Of shade and sunshine leave no blight,
And Time still lightly lay his hand
On this quaint dwelling "low and white."





WERT
BOOKBINDING
Grantville, Pa
Nov.-Dec. 1988

